

Lost time injury (LTI) caused by inadvertent activation of expired line throwing device

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A member has reported an incident in which a crewman was seriously injured when inadvertently struck by a line throwing rocket.

What happened?

The incident occurred when a search was made for a small diameter rope for use as a plumb line. Since no suitable rope was easily available, a member of the crew decided, without consulting anybody else, that the small diameter line from an old rocket assisted line throwing apparatus (LTA) could be used. Whilst trying to retrieve the line from the device, it slipped from the crew member's hands, dropped to the deck and unfortunately went off. A crew member was working nearby and was inadvertently struck, causing a deep cut on his left leg near the shin.

Our member's investigation noted the following:

- The LTA was uncontrolled and was not on any inventory list.
- The LTA had no safety pin or markings indicating date of manufacture, operating instructions or expiry date.
- There was inadequate control of spares and stock leading to a shortage of rope for the task in hand.
- The crew member took no account of the possible risk to himself and others in handling an explosive device.

The company made a number of recommendations particularly concerning pyrotechnic devices such as flares and rockets:

- Pyrotechnics should be controlled items, stored in a safe place, and only used by appropriately trained personnel.
- Pyrotechnics should be used only for the purpose for which they were intended or manufactured.
- Expired or 'out of date' pyrotechnics should be disposed of according to local regulatory requirements, and vessel crew should be fully familiar with company procedures and requirements for disposal.

The company made a number of further recommendations:

- Better control of work and toolbox talks might have prevented this incident.
- Vessel crew should be aware of vessel garbage management plan.
- Control of spares should be such that appropriate quantities of parts and stock are available for everyday operations.

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